

From Covers to Carpenters: A Special Fort Stanton Restoration Project

From Fort Stanton State Monument comes an inspiring story of a cultural property getting a job done in tough times, as a team of volunteers helped repair and restore part of a building, in exchange for use of the facilities.

Beginning in February, and completing the project the end of March, covers from the Southwest Region (SWR) of the internationally known National Speleological Society (NSS) arrived at Fort Stanton with hammers, saws, drills and a lot of know-how. As part of the SWR's 50th Anniversary celebration (www.caves.org/region/swr/), several talented volunteers agreed to perform a service project in exchange for use of the cafeteria, other buildings, and the Parade Grounds for meetings, activities, and a banquet at the end of May. Their assignment was to repair the second floor balcony rails and supports on Building 9, which dates back to 1866 when it was first used as a guard house, later changing to the Adjutant's Office. Major improvements came to the Adjutant's Office in 1877, and a library was added. Toward the end of the 1890s it metamorphosed into a school reading room, post office and recreation hall. During the 1930s-50s it was also a movie hall. It currently serves as the facility manager's office and work area.

Historian Lynda Sánchez, a Fort Stanton advocate and NMAM member, says, "I like to call this kind of project 'saving Fort Stanton one nail, one balustrade at a time.' Building 9, like many of the 1870s structures needed repair and just plain old TLC. The railing or balustrade along the second story was badly deteriorating and required painting and replacement of balusters and other parts that had totally rotted. Ultimately these volunteers saved the state thousands of dollars because restoration work is very expensive."

The State Monuments Division furnished the materials for the project and the covers provided the labor. Reconstruction and wood working experts discussed the process; materials were identified and ordered. Two weekends were planned to complete the project.

The team commuted from Arizona, Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and El Paso. A few of the volunteers live in Lincoln County, and each and every one believes restoring Fort Stanton is a worthy cause.

For more information on this creative partnership, visit www.caves.org/region/swr/, or contact Lynda Sánchez (Public Relations Liaison for the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project), 575-653-4821.



Above: NMAM member Lynda Sánchez sweeps while Wayne Walker works on the railing.

Below: Volunteers help to restore Building 9 at Fort Stanton State Monument. Photos courtesy of Pete Lindsley.



Building 9, the former Adjutant's Office, at Fort Stanton, after recent restoration. Photo courtesy of Pete Lindsley.

New Mexico's Small Museums, A *Links* Series Fort Stanton Museum

Located within the vast and impressive Fort Stanton State Monument in Lincoln County is Fort Stanton's museum. The museum building was built in 1855 and used as a Barracks, Post Hall and later served as an administration building during the fort's hospital era. It has been recently restored with a Save America's Treasure's grant and state capital outlay monies. An introductory video and exhibits tell Stanton's history from its military beginnings in 1855, through its service as a tuberculosis hospital for the Merchant Marines, and its use as a CCC camp in the

Depression and as an internment camp for German prisoners and Japanese internees during World War II.

The museum is open April through November on Thursday through Saturday 10-4, Sunday 12-4, and Monday 10-4. December through March it is open Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 12-4. For the latest information on tours and special events visit www.fort-stanton.org.

A trip to Fort Stanton State Monument is easily combined with a trip to nearby Lincoln State Monument, open seven days a week, 8:30am. to 4:30pm (closed some holidays). For more details, visit nmmonuments.org or call 575-653-4372. The Bosque Redondo Memorial at Fort Sumner also tells an important piece of the Fort Stanton story; see www.nmmonuments.org or call 575-355-2573.